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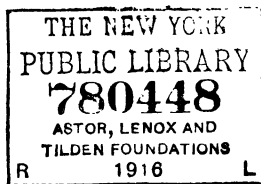
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The Book
of x\
Winifred Maynard



NEW YORK
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G. P. Putnam's Sons
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The Knickerbocker Press
1916



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The author of this book, who is now dead, was a real woman, although Winifred Maynard was not her real name. These poems of hers, covering a period of thirteen years in her life (from seventeen to thirty), were written for herself, and shown to very few people. With one exception, they have been arranged in the exact order of their composition.

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PART I
Asleep

KINDRED

BENEATH the cold pure mantle of the snow
The earth lies like a weary child asleep;
Above, the calm bright stars their courses keep,
Marking the spheral chime with motion slow.

And in the night my soul awakes and cries,
"O wide white purity, so deep and still,
And ye, O stars, serene above all ill,
Who search infinity with wide clear eyes—

"By that which once I was, and am no more,
When from that deep I came to which I go,
By my first purity, O stainless snow,
I claim you kin, as in those days of yore.

"Still through this flesh that baffling clogs and
mars,
I catch faint glimpses of eternity;
And by the answering thrills that wake in me,
I claim you kindred, O eternal stars!"

THE RETURN OF THE STUDENT

BENEATH the gnarled, wide-spreading apple-tree
The student lay, head pillowed on his hands,
And through the leaves that interlaced above
Watched the white clouds drift by across the blue.
It was a May mid-afternoon; the breeze,
Entangled in the whispering labyrinth,
Strove to escape by fits and starts, and still
Enmeshed itself more hopelessly, and ceased,
Only to strive again.

Before his feet

The sloping meadow, strewn with buttercups,
Lay like a cloth of gold—no bright cold ore,
But Nature's wealth, aglow with gleaming life;
Beyond it stretched a yellow strip of road
White-fringed with daisies; on the farther side,
All billowy silver-green, the young rye rose
Up to the crest of trees that crowned the slope.
High from their midst uprose the distant spire,
A still white finger pointing heavenward.

All this he saw, dreaming with half-closed eyes;

The Return of the Student 5

And as he lay, nor sleeping, nor awake,
The murmuring of the wind among the leaves,
The answering chirp of birds from tree to tree,
The voices of the myriad tiny things
That in the long grass have their dwelling-place,
Blent to his ear in one deep tender voice,
A voice unknown to him, and yet well-known,
The voice of Nature; and she spoke—

“My child,
Ah, I have waited long for thee. Each day
I sent thee messengers: a wandering breeze,
A green bough blown athwart the window-pane,
A blade of grass betwixt the paving-stones,
Glories of gold and crimson morn and eve,
And the still splendor of the stars—all these
Daily I sent to tell thee that my arms
Were ever open and my welcome warm.

“For still I knew that thou wouldst come at last,
That thou couldst never quite forget those days
When thou, a little child, didst love me well,
And brought'st me all thy childish griefs and cares,
And how I taught and comforted thee then.
And now that thou no longer art a child,
Still I have power to teach and comfort.

6 The Return of the Student

“Lo,
What do men know they did not learn of me?
Before they were, I was, and I shall be
When they have passed and left no trace.

“And so
Come, lay thy weary head upon my breast
And feel the pulsing of my mighty heart,
The life-beats of the universe; and I
Will take thee by the hand and lead thee on
Through all fair fields of knowledge, by green
ways
Of wisdom, up to those eternal heights
Where in the dread white sanctity of truth,
Awful in majesty, yet infinite
In love, dwells He whose minister I am.”

Startled, the student raised his eyes. The sun,
A dying conqueror, had built himself
A wonderful cloud-city in the west.
He rose; and all the beauty and the peace
Touched him with longing, till with outstretched
arms,
“O truth more fair than dream,” the student
cried,
“O Nature, take me back and let me learn!”

SONNET

WHEN I behold the heavens starry-strown,
The myriad moving worlds in light arrayed,
In all their varied majesty displayed,
And muse on all the æons that have flown
Since God first set them, guards about his throne,
And on the æons ere their course be stayed—
The thought appals me, and I shrink dismayed,
So weak—a leaf by winds of fortune blown;
So small—before that vastness wellnigh
naught.
But then the soul within me answers high,
“Wherefore so wrong me by a moment’s
thought?
Lo, all these brilliant worlds that gem the sky
Shall fade and pass away, their purpose
wrought,
But I shall live—shall live and never die!”

BOREAS

O MIGHTY masterful voice, from the regions of
darkness blown,
At the rush of thy coming the forest kings
bend low their stately heads
And pour out their gifts before thee, green and
golden and brown,
And the sleeping river-giants toss in their
narrow beds.

Whence comest thou, ruler of Nature, merciless,
torturing, fell?—
And whither directest thy flight? at thy bidding
the gray leaden clouds
Overspread the blue heavens, the dome of a
temple where oft thou dost dwell,
But thee hath no mortal beheld, whom majesty
viewless enshrouds.

All things upon earth have beginning and end;
thou art ever the same:

The flower that springs by the wayside and
withers before thy keen thrust,
And the beggar who clutches his rags close about
him, aged and lame,
Shivering before thy fierce chill—shall return,
whence they came, to the dust.

But thou—thou are ageless and free, thou who
searchest infinity, lone;
No power of man can restrain thee, mad in the
joy of thy strength,
Like an angel of vengeance sent down from be-
side the Omnipotent's throne
To search out and punish the sin of the land
through its breadth and its length.

TO THE MUSE

O GODDESS, whom I worship from afar
As might a firefly the evening star,
Grant me, I pray thee, but one favoring
sign!

For if a ceaseless yearning night and day,
A longing burning at my heart alway,
Deserve aught at thy hands, O thou divine;
Or if laborious toil and patient care,
A spirit eager every task to dare,
Avail with thee, thy favor should be mine.

For I have sought thee from my infant years,
Humbly, and ever filled with haunting fears
Lest that, which I the fire from heaven thought,
Might prove a marsh-light sent to torture me,
Leading me even farther off from thee—
Grant, goddess, that I have not vainly sought!
Give me the poet's eye, the poet's mind,
That I may serve thee in my place assigned,
Although the lowest who for thee hath wrought.

To the Muse

II

What must I do? or can I only wait?
So that it cometh, though it cometh late,
 I will be patient, I will not complain.
Or if through pain and grief the gift must come,
Send them, and I will suffer all things, dumb;
 Ay, gladly, so it may be won through pain;
I will not shrink or turn away from aught
By which thy precious favor may be bought,
 If at the last my toil be not in vain!

VOICES AT NIGHT

At night I wake, at the dead of night,
When the wind is crying loud,
And the moon and stars have hid their light
Behind a deep black cloud—
At night I wake, in the ghostly night,
And shiver with speechless dread,
Watching the flickering firelight
That points with fingers red
At shadowy forms which crouch and hide
In the corners of the room;
They glare upon me, open-eyed,
And beckon through the gloom.

Out in the dark where gleams no light,
Strange forces have their way:
Like giants wrestling in the night
The tall trees strain and sway;
Along the rushing wind are blown
Wild voices from afar—
Voices that wail and sob and moan—
But whence or what they are,

Or spirits of the earth and air
 In maddest revelry,
Or souls that wander in despair,
 The dead that cannot die,
Or demons loosed from lowest hell
 This night without control—
I know not, but I know full well
 The voices call my soul!

Some day I know the doom will fall:
 My soul will take her flight
And follow whence the voices call,
 Out in the realms of night—
A waste, a deep that knows no shore,
 Where darkness is the light,
And shades and shrieks whirl evermore
 Along the storm-wind's flight—
A shadowy form, a wordless cry,
 Companion of the lost,
To roam beneath a starless sky,
 Forever tempest-tossed!

ON CHRISTMAS MORNING EARLY

THE holy night is past, and Christmas dawn,
The fairest of the year, is coming nigh:
Still o'er the earth a dusky veil is drawn,
But lines of cloud low down the eastern sky
Along the hill,
Lie touched with purple fire; in awe the world is
still.

Last-lingering of the slow-departing host,
The Morning Star, large, clear and frosty
bright,
Hangs trembling high above that cloudy coast—
A jewel dropped by Darkness in his flight—
Across the deeps,
The saffron deeps of space, watch with the Earth
she keeps.

“Behold, He lifteth up his countenance!
The glory of the Lord is risen on me!”
(So sings the Earth) “a light that doth advance
And widens onward, flowing like the sea.

On Christmas Morning Early 15

The farthest lands
Shall see this light, and lift to Him adoring
hands!"

"It shall not die," returns the radiant Star,
"His light shall spread, until the smallest
world

That on the brink of Chaos roams afar
Shall dwell therein, and Darkness shall be
hurled

Down from his throne;
And all the stars shall sing Incarnate Love
alone!"

WINTER MORNING

WHEN the delicate pink of the early dawn
Lies along the low gray hills,
Then my sleeping soul is strangely drawn
By the star that trembles and thrills
In lessening splendor high in the east;
It calls me in my rest
Till, from the bonds of sleep released,
I leave my warm white nest.

Then forth I fare by the wonted path
Where violets grow in spring
All morning-gemmed from their dewy bath,
And softly the brook doth sing;
Now the frosted grasses, long and white,
Are crisp beneath my feet,
And I drink the air with a keen delight,
Like a fire cold and sweet.

The swift dark brook its secret tells
In tones for my ears too nice;
It ripples and rings like fairy bells
Under its shores of ice.

The trees, with delicate tracery
 Against the clear pale sky,
 Lean down to listen, and leaning see
 Things hidden from mortal eye.

Ah, never a morn of the morns of June
 Is half so fair as this!
 What is the warmth of her languorous noon
 Beside this pure cold bliss?
 The eyes of the soul can see more far,
 Looking up to heights untrod,
 And the faint white point of the morning star
 Is a light from the gates of God!

2

PREMONITION

WHITE heaps of cloud were drifting fast
Across the April sky,
The wind called softly as he passed,
And straightway forth went I.
A faint new fragrance filled the air,
Blown from the robes of Spring;
On bare brown branches everywhere
The buds were opening;
The birds were singing merrily,
And by the path a child
Stood singing too, for very glee,
And looked at me and smiled.
He put his little hand in mine
And drew my steps along,
And at the touch a power divine
Woke all my soul to song.
We sang together as we went—
The birds, the child, and I—
And with a low accompaniment
The brook ran rippling by;

We had no need of words or tune—

The birds, the child, and I—

We sang the springtime's ancient rune,

Old as the earth and sky;

And Nature bared the heart of her

Where God's deep secrets dwell;

We needed no interpreter,

We understood them well!

AUGUST AFTERNOON AND EVENING

MINSTRELS of summer sing high in the tree-tops,
Or low in the long grass sweet with hidden
bloom;
The wind sings too, half-sleeping, while the
flowers
Anoint him with perfume.

Drowned in the meadow-grass, August blue over,
Dreamily I hear the drowsy music rise and fall;
The warriors of the cornfield whisper to each
other,
But there cometh no foe at all;
Only the butterflies, golden as the sunlight,
White as the small scattered clouds in the sky,
Come floating down on the nodding crimson
clover,
Then lazily they flutter by.

So all the long afternoon to its closing:
Through twilight portals the stars pace out,
And fireflies, ghosts of the day's dead flowers,
Flicker in mazy rout;

August Afternoon and Evening 21

And up from the river the mist comes creeping,
Flooding the meadows with ghostly seas,
Till the world is all mist and dark trees sighing
And stars looking down on these.

THE LITTLE SERVING-MAID

BESIDE her open window sat the little serving-
maid,

As up the east came creeping a line of purple
shade;

A narrow little window high up the castle wall,
The narrowest, the smallest, and the highest of
them all.

But the little serving-maiden was happy as could
be—

Hers was the soul that understands and hers the
eyes that see—

And in the quiet evening, like some high-nesting
bird,

She sang a song which no one but the restless
breezes heard.

“My lady hath a bower,
All furnished gorgeously,
But in my high gray tower
’Tis pleasanter to be!

The Little Serving-Maid 23

"Upon my lady's walls and floor
The woven flowers bloom,
The air is laden evermore
With rich and rare perfume;
The colors are too bright for me,
The odors clog my breath—
Sometimes my lady scarce I see
Or hear the words she saith.

"Before my lady's lattice
Hang heavy tapestries,
And when my lady lifts them
The passing folk she sees:
Great lords and ladies in their pride
And gallant knights pass by,
But through my ivy curtain
A fairer view have I.

"I see the everlasting hills
In solemn grandeur stand,
The river with its thousand rills
That waters all the land,
The forests grim and olden
Where evil spirits lurk,
The meadows green and golden
Where busy reapers work;

24 The Little Serving-Maid

The stars are all my brothers,
The moon looks down on me
With smile so like a mother's,
I cannot lonely be.

"Ah, fair my lady's bower,
All furnished gorgeously,
But in my high gray tower
'Tis pleasanter to be!"

A SONG OF SUMMER

I LOOKED and saw the Summer
Come floating from the south,
The hush of dreams upon her,
Time's kisses on her mouth;
And as I looked and listened
I heard the Ages sing,
"Once more, O Earth, awaken,
And give her welcoming!
"The miracle unceasing,
The old eternal joy,
The life that cold and darkness
May hide but not destroy,
Shall spread throughout thy borders
In budding bursts of bloom,
And in the solemn forests
Light up the ancient gloom.
"For where she goes is gladness,
And where she passes, peace;
And from the winter's sadness
She gives the world release.

A Song of Summer

Yea, hearts grown old in sorrow
Rejoice with her and sing—
Therefore, O Earth, awaken,
And give her welcoming!"

PART II
Dreaming

A DREAM

I WOKE in the dark, dark midnight
 When the lamps of the sky were low,
And watched the sighing tree-tops
 That wavered to and fro:
Then one by one, across the glass
The Dreams began to pass.

And some were winged like angels
 And smiling floated past;
And some had eyes like demons
 With deadly power to blast:
But each without a word or cry
From gloom to gloom went by.

Then last there came with rosy crown
 And eyes of evening stars,
A messenger from Love himself—
 Whom Fate as yet debars:
All night that Dream abode with me—
A Dream, beloved, of thee!

VILLANELLE

I sit apart, though I do not weep;
 Why should I weep that have no woe?
My heart is still like a child asleep

And yet it stirs in slumber deep;
 But what may vex it I do not know.
I sit apart, though I do not weep.

The days go by, like snails they creep,
 The buds of Spring begin to blow—
My heart is still like a child asleep.

Is there none to bid it wake and leap
 Into life, of all that come and go?
I sit apart, though I do not weep.

Must I say when Autumn again doth heap
 The lap of Earth with fruits that glow,
“My heart is still like a child asleep?”

When will he come, who alone doth keep
 The charm that shall waken and teach to
 grow?

I sit apart, though I do not weep,
 For my heart is still like a child asleep.

WIND SONGS

THROUGH the winter night the wind shivers in
the pine-trees,

Shivers like a little child, crying with the cold;
The stars are all jewels sparkling in heaven,
Hard bright jewels of gold.

"O the winter, the cold cruel winter!"

Sobs the wind, all shaking then,
Crouching for warmth in the cheerless pine-
trees,

"Summer, O come again!"

Through the nights of spring the wind murmurs
in the blossoms,

Murmurs like a little child dreaming pleasant
things;

The stars are all flowers, fallen in heaven
From angel garlandings.

"O the summer, the warm happy summer!"

Sighs the wind, contented then,
Nesting high in the sweet apple-blossoms,
"Summer has come again!"

SONNET

O CHRISTUS, thou to whom my faith of years
Hath looked as very crystal perfectness
Of truth, behold, new thoughts upon me press,
And with them come new doubts and strange
new fears;
For there are many voices in my ears—
But if they speak aright I cannot guess—
Each crying, "This way truth; accept not
less!"
Forgive me, if disloyal it appears
That I should follow these through time and
space
And prove them. If I loved in ignorance
With love that blinds itself, afraid to know,
I should but wrong thee deeper. May thy face
Still be the goal to which all paths advance;
And be thy peace upon me as I go!

MY PRAYER

THERE are those who pray for power,
And those who pray for fame:
For the strength that shakes the nations,
And a comet-flashing name—
A comet-flashing name—but I
Lift hands to Heaven above
For one great boon of blessing,
The one great gift of Love!

There are those who pray for wisdom,
And those who pray for peace:
For wide and godlike vision,
For dreamy lotus-ease—
For dreamy lotus-ease—but I
Lift hands to Heaven above
Still praying for one blessing,
The one great gift of Love!

ALONE

THE vaulted dark, white-fired with stars,
And the river gleaming wide,
And the lights that reach in long bright bars
And tremble with the tide—

Out in the darkness rides my boat
Where they may not intrude; .
And my soul is risen and seems to float
On wings of solitude.

And look, a star fades down the sky
In a trail of long white flame,
As if God bent from his throne on high
And called me by my name!

THE PHARISEE

WHEN I look out upon the world of men
And mark how mean and selfish are their aims,
How few there are to whom the mighty claims
Of truth and honor—though acknowledged when
Occasion calls, with facile tongue and pen—
Are more than empty but well-sounding names;
How few there are who carry open shames
To those whose hearts are like a wild beast's
den

Where rot the remnants of old revelry:—

I thank my God that I am not as they.

And then a fear comes like a sudden blow,
So that with broken words and tremblingly,
“In thy great mercy guard me, Lord,” I pray,
“Lest I should be like these, and should
not know!”

TO A CYCLAMEN

PURPLE five-winged butterfly,
Poised on slender stem,
Springing when the winds pass by,
Wild to be with them—
Canst thou solve the riddle I
Ask myself, and asking sigh?

What I would be, that I know;
What I am, I feel:
Up my soul would striving go
Till the light unseal
All its close-shut wonders—still
Strength is wanting to the will.

Thou wast prisoned in the earth,
Thou hast left thy bed,
Risen up to life and mirth,
Come as from the dead;
All thy being is complete—
Wilt not tell thy secret, sweet?

To a Cyclamen

37

Was it that the mighty Sun
From his place on high
With a warm swift magic won
Where thou, weak, didst lie?
Drew thee up, by gentle spell,
Nearer to himself to dwell?

Would that thus a mighty Love,
Down through time and space
Reaching, might fulfil whereof
Hints thine aery grace—
Draw me up from cold and gloom
Into light and warmth and bloom!

THE STAR

FROM faint-lit windows of the west
There looked a trembling star;
Alone, for she had left the rest
Behind her loitering far.

"O sister," seeing her, I cried,
"For such thou surely art,
A lonely star, in heaven wide,
To me, a lonely heart—

"Even when they come in shining rout
Who lingered far behind,
And when they circle thee about,
None near thee wilt thou find.

"For even those that seem most near
Are leagues of light away;
So is it with my spirit here,
Most lonely night and day.

"No power can break the laws that set
Thy fellows far from thee,
And never soul with mine has met,
Though thousands round me be."

Thereat two lovers caught my eye
Beneath the trees that showed
Black tracery against the sky;
The star more brightly glowed.

“Ay, never power can break those laws;
But might a comet pass
And he whose magic all things draws
Draw thee, a helpless mass—

“And bear thee from thy wonted place,
Thy ancient placid round,
With him to sweep through hollow space
And light the deeps profound—

“Would it be well, O sister, so?
If he should loose his hold
And cast thee off, alone to go
Back to thy place of old—

“Would it be then, O sister, well?
Thou mightest space explore
From highest heaven to lowest hell,
And find it nevermore!”

INSTINCT AND REASON

(THE black night is falling from a cold gray sky,
And the wild wind is calling as he passes by;
He whistles "Follow," and upon his track
Through the darkness hollow speeds a demon
pack!)

Thus and thus the poet saith:
Pleasant words are these,
And their music murmureth
Like a meadow breeze—
Life is laughter; as for Death,
It is dreamless ease.

(The spirits in prison are loosed for to-night—
From their graves they are risen; their steps are
so light
The long churchyard grasses bend not to their
tread,
As to and fro passes the Dance of the Dead!)

Is it not a foolish thing,
Day and night to fret
Over that which Time must bring;

And more foolish yet,
Load the happy Present's wing
With an old Regret?

(The window was darkened—what was That
looked in?

Sure it stopped and hearkened, seeking for its
kin;

Moving in the curtain Something took its place—
Ah, but I am certain once I knew that face!)

As for angel or for ghost,
God and heaven and hell,
Such are nothing more at most
Than a tale we tell;
Let the fool believe—thy boast,
Reason balanced well.

(The darkness is burning behind me with eyes;
It needs not my turning—I know otherwise;
The air is aquiver with rustle of wings,
And I feel the cold shiver of spiritual things!)

"ES WÄR' ZU SCHÖN GEWESEN"

My dear, I do not think you were to blame;
Mine was the fault, who did not see the end,
Cheating myself and striving to pretend
Your love for me and mine for you the same.
For long before I ever heard your name
Each night I prayed to God that he would send
That which I never yet had known—a friend;
I thought my prayer was answered when you
came.

Mine was the fault, who did not understand:
I opened wide my spirit's inmost door
And would have laid the key within your hand;
But on the threshold for a while you stood,
Then turned away in light incurious mood.
So I have closed and fastened it once more.

“MUCH STUDY”

It chanced upon a glorious Autumn morn
That I was weary of my books and said,
“Why should I dwell forever with the dead
When mine are soul and body yet unworn?”
And therewithal I left in sudden scorn
The gray halls tapestried with ivies red,
To find a way my feet were wont to tread,
’Twixt russet woods and fields of yellow corn.

Then as I walked my scorn within me wrought
Until I cried aloud, “O fool and blind,
Who seeking knowledge, yet hast never sought
To find it saving through another’s mind,
Who by the lips of Nature had been taught!
If thou too questioned, would she be less
kind?”

THE SEARCH

THE ways are carpeted with frost
All in a keen gray dawn,
As I go to seek for something lost,—
If it be not wholly gone.

I seek again the solemn awe
That wont to master me
When all the world around I saw
Awaiting light to be;

I seek again the well-known sight
Of intricate bare trees
Against a lucid sky—delight
Of clear-cut traceries;

I seek the old remembered thrill
That through my pulses came
When the eager air began to fill
My blood with living flame;

I seek again the deep desire
For work, the scorn for rest,
The feeling of strength that could not tire,
The joy of an opening quest;

I seek—God grant that I may find!
For if I find not, then
There is gone from me the poet's mind,
And I am as other men.

THE DEAD FAITH

ONCE I had a pretty Faith,
A creature born with wings
Whereon the light was wont to play
In rainbow colorings;

And when I woke at noon of night
And heard the black wind cry,
And black and evil thoughts like bats
Across the gloom did fly—

Then came my pretty Faith to me,
And sitting by my bed
It sang a magical sweet song
Until they all were fled.

But now the light is vanished
That played upon its wings,
And its voice has lost the power
Of routing evil things;

The Dead Faith

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I take it with me to the church
 When solemn mass is said—
But the music does not move it,
 So I know that it is dead;

And now it never answers
 Although I cry aloud,
So I have made my pretty Faith
 A tear-wet burial-shroud,

And I have buried it away
 And no one knows the grave;
But now I dread the haunted night,
 When none will come to save!

RONDEL

AND art thou he for whom I wait?
A little timid hope I feel
Which then I hasten to conceal,
And trembling fear and hesitate.

For it would be a joy too great,
Too like the gifts of Fortune's wheel—
And yet a timid hope I feel
That thou art he for whom I wait.

I scarce dare whisper it, lest Fate,
Dark, ever-lurking Fate, should steal
This fancied joy, and firmly seal
The open, heaven-glimpsing gate—
Yet—art thou he for whom I wait?

PART III

Awake

INVOCATION

COME to me, Passion, and shake me!
Anger or Hatred or Love,
Take me and mold me or break me;
Come from below or above,
Lift me to heaven or cast me to hell,
Whirl me through outermost space—
So thou remove me from this where I dwell,
Plane of the gray commonplace!

TO ONE WHO MIGHT BE LOVED

ALTHOUGH I walk alone through all my days,
And wander down dark paths that have no end
Save yawning gulfs, without a single friend
Whose voice and hand might cheer the cheerless
ways,

Still would I be stout-hearted, nor upraise
A tremulous plaint—but all my powers bend
To brave endurance of what Fate may send;
If Fate there be, nor all the world a maze.

But that I may not prove a coward weak,
Who raises altars to himself and wails
When none will come to sacrifice thereon,
I pray thee, from my life be swiftly gone;
For when I see thee, all my courage fails,
And the impossible I fain would seek.

UNANSWERED PRAYER

I HAVE not wearied God with prayers that thou
Shouldst love me, knowing well such prayers
were vain;

No charms had I of old, nor any now,
And I have grown accustomed to this pain.
My only gift is some small share of wit,
Which thou, so rich therein, might'st well
despise;

All that I have thou hast, and more of it,
And nothing I could give thee wouldst thou
prize.

But I have prayed for this: that some small place,
Some humble little place, be found for me
Where I may work, and working see thy face
And hear thy voice; and if yet more may be,
That what I do may serve thee, though thou art
Unknowing—this I beg with eyelids wet,
I, that have had no tears for bitter smart—
But my petition is not granted yet.

TULLIA

WASTED with illness, worn with weariness,
In utter lassitude all white and frail,
Among her pale-green pillows Tullia lay—
Cicero's daughter, Dolabella's wife—
Like melting snow upon a bank of grass;
While Tiro, sitting near her, read aloud
With measured softness musical Greek verse—
Tiro, her father's freedman, gray of hair
And stern of face, about whose mouth were
carved

The bitter lines of constant self-restraint.
Save for his voice the summer air was still.
Only the swaying of the slave-girl's fan
And plash of far-off fountains filled each pause.

But once, he stopping, Tullia raised herself
With sudden force.

“At length I see the truth:
Beauty to women is like strength to men—
Whoever lacks is pitiful indeed,

And fools are they who fancy otherwise.

I was a fool.

“When Dolabella came
Seeking my hand, I found not in myself
The charms and coquetries that bind men’s
hearts,

But thought to fill their place with intellect—”
Faintly she smiled in mournful self-contempt—

“Be his companion mind and body both,

A wife to him, and not a courtesan.

Thou canst not know, thou who hast never loved,

What worship in my heart I paid to him.”

Her voice dragged into silence; Tiro winced

And deeper grew the lines about his mouth.

Then wearily she spoke.

“What matters it?

The pain is past; no longer can I feel

The stab of disillusion. Like seeks like;

I knew it not with my philosophy.

But when I followed him that night—that
night—

And in his arms, rose-crowned, exceeding fair,

I saw her—then at last I understood.

“His cruelty—I cannot blame him now;

What player but would break his lute in wrath

If never did it answer to his will?
And such a lute am I; incapable
Of that because of which I should have been.
Therefore I blame not him, but only Fate;
Athena has no lovers."

Therewithal

Resistless languor drew her eyelids down;
And on the pale-green pillows, white and still,
Lay the frail body as if life were fled.
But Tiro, coming nearer, raised his eyes—
And in them gloomed the anguish of great love
That fain would comfort, but is stricken dumb
Knowing itself unknown and undesired—
And gazed in silence on the wasted form.

THE BARREN STOCK

("The Queen of Scots hath a fair son, and I am but a barren stock."—Elizabeth, Queen of England.)

I WOULD not yield to bitterness
When happy wives I see;
Theirs is the greater, mine the less—
One deals to them and me.
Warm living love is better far
Than the cold joys of Science are;
I will not underrate its worth
To satisfy me in my dearth,
But bravely take the part assigned
By the one universal mind.

And yet—to-day I saw a child,
A little child with serious eyes,
And in my heart a yearning wild
Awoke with stubborn cries.
O Thou, the spirit of the whole,
How shall I be content?
Thou givest me a hungry soul,
And husks for nourishment!

ANSWER

EVERY day I cried to God:
"Thou that madest man,
Thou that rulest hearts of men
Since the world began—
I am but a thinking clod,
Life beyond my ken;
Dead, although I breathe and move.
Send down fire from above,
Send me love, great love!

"Not the placid love of home,
Parents and their child;
No, nor friendship at its best,
But a thing more wild;
Passion with the force of doom,
Bearing down arrest—
Love, a strong man's love! to feel
All my ordered thoughts areel,
Crushed against his breast!"

God looked down on me and heard;
And the strong man came.

I that was so hard and cold
Melted into flame;
I that was so proud of word
Meekly was controlled,
Finding happiness therein.
Then a stern voice as of old:
 "This for thee is sin."

“BUT IN THE NIGHT—”

ALL through the long day I am wise:
When morning comes I pray
Reason to guide my thoughts, and rise
With memories put away;

All through the long day I am strong:
I bravely lift and bear
The weary burdens, borne so long,
Of loneliness and care;

All through the long day I am good:
I grant the higher claim,
And when my starved heart cries for food
I silence it with blame.

All through the long day—ah, but when
The stars from twilight grow,
And slips the crescent moon again
Down to the earth below—

My wisdom and my strength are gone,
My striving to be good;
The thoughts I must not think upon
No more can be withstood.

“But in the Night—” 61

The river with its paths of light,
The farther misty shore,
The slumbrous calm of summer night—
I know them all once more;

And all my life was but for this:
Strong arms that hold me fast,
And lips that teach me with a kiss—
Home for the heart at last!

I dream the dream, and I forget
The waking and the pain,
The shame that scorches even yet,
The loss that paid for gain;

I shall remember them with morn,
And wisdom come thereof—
But in the night I cry forlorn,
Desiring only love!

N'IMPORTE

WHEN first I lay bewildered in the clutch
Of pain whose marks are on me till I die,
My would-be pride broke down in piteous cry
Of longing for a look, a word, a touch;
But now my strange indifferent mood is such
That worth is gone from what I held most high,
A dream like other dreams that pass me by,
Affecting me as little and as much.

For there has fallen on me a heavy cloud
Of utter weariness; I cannot strive,
Since there is nothing I desire to gain,
But gaze with dim compassion on the crowd.
Something is dead in me that was alive,
And now I cannot even suffer pain.

THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE

("More are the children of the desolate than
the children of the married wife.")

O WHOSE are the little voices
That cry when night is deep,
Entreating little voices
That call me in my sleep,
And when I wake I hear them,
And trembling yearn and weep?

"The voices of the baby souls
Whose time has come to live;
They cry upon you for the life
It should be yours to give!"

O whose are the little fingers
That touch me in the night,
The little hands upon my breast
That grip my heart-strings tight,
The little arms about my neck
That cling as if in fright?

"The souls of unborn children
Are lonely as they roam;
They cling to you for comfort,
In whom should be their home!"

APRIL

Now stand the trees all shimmering
In veils of misty green,
And in among them glimmering
Forsythia gold is seen,
Like sheaves of sunrays planted
Upon the level sward;
The dumb world moves enchanted
Toward uttering of a word.

The barren air, out-flowering
In bursts of sudden song,
Caresses all things cowering
That feared its touch so long;
Ah, cold and harsh no longer,
It wooes with certain charm:
Now yield, for life is stronger,
And cannot work you harm!

A SAPPHIC

IN a dream I came at last to my desire:
When above the southern trees
Rose the Scorpion, lifting up his jeweled fire,
Then the gods were pleased to grant a little
ease;
Sending peace upon my never-peaceful spirit,
Sending love in such a guise
Sternly-watching Wisdom saw no need to fear it,
But looked on with smiling eyes.
By the hidden path between the willow-bushes,
Passing near the quiet pool
Where a single star lies gleaming in the rushes,
In my dream I walked, and felt the pleasant
cool
And the slowly breathing silence of the twilight;
In my dream I wept—"Now comes the wonted
pain,
When the primal instinct wakes beneath the high
night,
Crying out its right to reign!"

Then I turned a thicket in the pathway's winding,
And the One was waiting there,

Whose I am beyond all binding or unbinding,
Whom I seek for everywhere.

Lesbian singer of the centuries departed,
This thy old lament is mine,
Reaching empty arms in darkness—broken-
hearted,

Finding nothing to entwine;
Thou the violet-crowned, the pure and softly
smiling—

Pure, but not of ice or stone—
“Now the moon is set,” thou mournest, “and
the Pleiads,
Night is passing by—and yet I sleep alone!”

APPASSIONATA

(Evening on the Heights)

ABOVE the city on a cliff
The great cathedral stands,
Upon its roof an angel,
A trumpet in his hands:

He cries across the city,
High-facing toward the east—
But who would pause to listen,
Except it be a priest?

For me there is no angel,
His call I cannot hear—
My Love's arm is about me,
His words are in my ear!

Beneath our feet the city
Lies stretched in lines of light,
And sliding golden serpents pass
Above it through the night—

The night that is a silver mist,
To beautify and blur—
But who would look upon it,
Save a philosopher?

For me there is no city,
Its lights I cannot see—
My Love has set his lips to mine,
And heaven dazzles me!

THE SLAVE

I WAS sleeping comforted,
 Wrapped about with dreams:
I was warmed and clothed and fed,
 Drank from rainbow streams;
Freed from Reason's cold restraint,
 Drowned in Passion's tide,
Yielding up my spirit faint
 To be vivified;
No one mocked me or reproved
 With a moral rod,
But to love and be beloved
 Was the law of God.

I was sleeping comforted—
 Reason came to me:
Reason stood beside my bed
 Looking angrily;
Reason tore me from my sleep
 With a ruthless hand:
"Fool, and did you think to keep
 From my just demand?"

The Slave

“Naked are you still and cold,
Hungry and athirst,
God is cruel as of old,
Love a thing accursed;
Wisdom lies in me alone
And the rule I gave—
Rise and put your fetters on,
You, who are my slave!”

SAINT CATHERINE

WHITE Saint Catherine stirred in her sleep,
Moved in her maiden bed,
For ghosts came stealing from darkness deep,
Bending above her head;

Ghosts of women loving and loved—
Love was their only vow—
Each at her breast had a burden that moved,
And a brand upon her brow.

White Saint Catherine frowned in her sleep:
“Why do you come to me,
You who have lost what I straitly keep,
Spotless virginity?”

White Saint Catherine sighed full deep:
“But what are those you bear,
By the warmth of your bosoms lulled asleep;
And that—beneath your hair?”

White Saint Catherine wept in her sleep:
“Black was your sin, no doubt,
But surely the pain of your shame was deep,
And tears may wash it out.”

Then turned the ghosts, all whispering

Like wind in the poplar leaves:

“What words are these from this poor pale thing?

It is for us she grieves!

“Truly our fingers were bare of rings,

But we have not done amiss;

We obeyed the voice of the eldest of things,

The Life that was and is.

“Truly the pain of our shame was great,

And the brand the world has set—

The world we travailed to recreate—

Is on our foreheads yet;

“But the pain of our shame is long since past,

And we are comforted—

For that which we gave we still hold fast,

And dying we are not dead!”

THE REASON

I DO not hate the woman
Between my Love and me,
Whose right in him is guarded
With due formality;

Yet her I would not pity
And I would bid him come,
Had I not seen her little child—
But now desire is dumb.

Her little son, that should be mine,
Looked up in startled wise,
And "Who are you?" he said to me,
His father in his eyes.

TO-MORROW

Now I will forget all passion and put aside all
pain,
And peace in the former fashion shall visit my
soul again;
I will have done with turning old memories o'er
and o'er,
And done with the fruitless yearning to look on
one face once more;
The thought shall no longer hurt me of the living
bar between,
For I will be brave and assert me, now that the
world grows green.

Now I will look out on the growing and see how
good it is,
The green and the gold just showing under the
April kiss,
The white magnolia flower against a dreamy sky,
And the soft slow-dripping shower, a veil drawn
gently by—
These are the drug for sorrow and I will drink
them deep:
I will drink them deep to-morrow; till then I
desire to weep.

THE EXCEPTION

WHEN fades the green and solid earth,
Dissolving mistily,
Then all the tired things go home:
They all go home—but me.

There is a place for every one:
The small bird has a nest,
The patient cattle have their stalls,
The child its mother's breast—

But I am tired more than these,
And have not anything;
The long night through, the wind and I
Go sadly wandering.

AFTER-THOUGHTS

THE slow gray current of monotonous days
Bears me from year to year, while dull amaze
Comes over me, to see the shores of youth
Already tinted with a purple haze.

But let deep clouds descend and hide them so!
Green barren banks where flowers would not
grow—

Dear little homely flowers that I love—
Because the South Wind did not rise and blow.

Yet weeds there were, of sudden bloom and
sweet,

Whose fragrance turns the blood to moving heat,
Whose roots are grappled in the heart of
things—

I tore them out and trod them with my feet.

I said: "I will not trifle with excuse;
Let Fate refuse me, I too can refuse."

Yet now I hear a voice that still repeats
"Were it not better done as others use?"

Descend, O clouds, and blot those shores from
sight!

Would I were far in age, forgetting quite
That ruined fragrance left upon the air,
In dreams of deep oblivion and the night!

Conclusion

“AND CAME FROM MARTYRDOM INTO
THIS PEACE”

(The Divine Comedy)

PEACE dwells with me throughout the day:

Her voice is in the trees,

Her touch is on the fields that sway

Like rippled silvery seas;

She lingers by the highway brown

Where crested flowers lean,

Or from the wide deep blue looks down

With gentle gaze serene.

Peace dwells with me throughout the night:

Whereas of old there came

Pain and desire, doubts of right,

And fierce corroding shame;

Now, as the constellations wheel

Above my pillowed head,

Her presence in the dark I feel

And slumber comforted.

82 Martyrdom into Peace

For out of longing brought to naught,
Most baffled when fulfilled,
And out of wisdom hardly bought,
Time's limbec has distilled
A charm unsealing every heart,
Close-shut before to me—
So that I walk no more apart,
But in a company.

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

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~~OCT 12 1916~~